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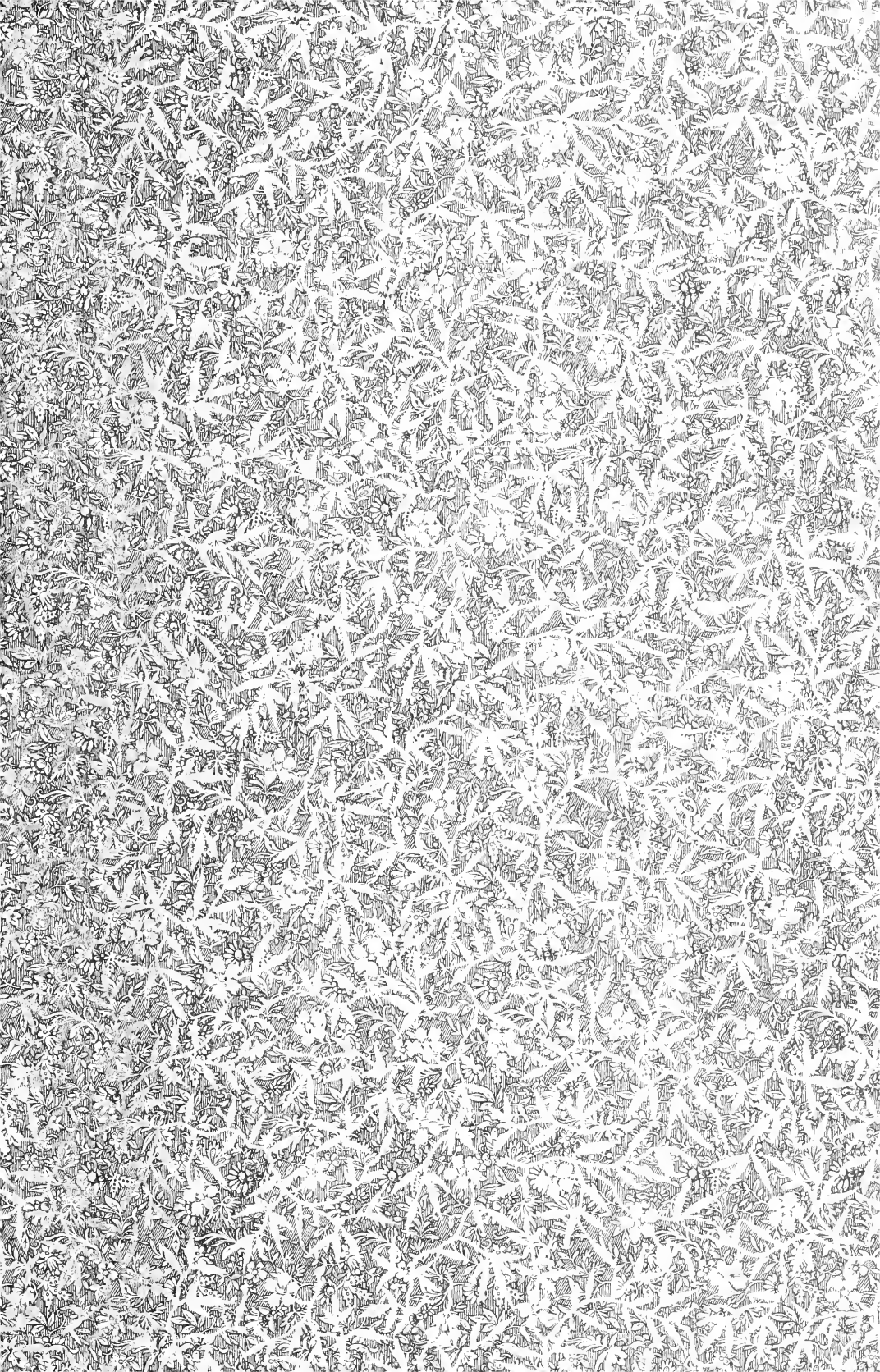


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AKUOK LODGE

LEAVES FROM ARBOR LODGE



BY
MARY FRENCH MORTON



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A FAIR LITTLE WORLD OF MY OWN.

I'VE a fair little world of my own,
A place where I enter alone
With Fancy to stray
O'er her beautiful way
And list to her musical tone.

O, she shows me such wonderful dreams
And I see such radiant gleams
Of all that is bright
And all that is right;
We drift over wandering streams,

Over streams with a murmur so sweet
No one can their music repeat.
I find not a word
To tell what I've heard
From voices whose echoes were fleet.

And so oft when with Fancy I flee
I turn to look backward and see
The charm that she lends
To faces of friends
Who live not in visions with me.

A charm from the flashing in sight
Of thoughts that with love are alight,
Like halos they fall
With grace over all
And linger with tenderness bright.

Away from the tumult and drone,
From throngs in which one is alone,
The shadows uplift
And restful tides drift
In that fair little world of my own.

WINTER'S LAUGHTER.

A CHRISTMAS CHIME.

The sleighbells are the Winter's laughter
That through the veiling snow comes flowing
When flakes are hither, thither blowing
Like airy sprites in all ways going
Blown on by winds that follow after.

It ripples with a mirth beguiling,
With gladness in its joyous greeting,
Fair, bygone memories repeating,
To hearts grown old in time's swift fleeting,
Till sad, grave lips unbend in smiling.

And with the sound of light hoofs prancing,
The laughter all its joy is flinging
Now here, now there, in strains of singing,
Till quick, young feet are gaily springing
And roguish eyes with glee are dancing.

It ripples with a sweet intoning
Across the snowdrifts' ghostly trailing
And sends its merry challenge hailing
The voices of the Old Year's wailing,
And mocks their soft and plaintive meaning

The frozen forest waits and listens
To catch the laughter, pealing, shaking
In trills, the sleeping trees awaking,
Till crystals from the branches breaking
Fall ringing where the ice stream glistens

O sleigh-bells are the joy-bells swelling,
When roadsides are with jewels twinkling,
To rise and fall in chime and tinkling,
Their showered tones of music sprinkling,
With Winter's laughter through them welling!

THE BACKLOG'S SONG OF SUMMER.

There's a sweet, enthralling magic
Lurking in the glowing fire,
Soft enchantment in it flickers,
And the song of hidden lyre
From the gnarled log's rugged surface
Sounds in faintest, fitful tone,
Oft a mirth is in its ringing,
Oft it has a saddened moan.

Gentle voices of the woodland
Echo, in its music weird,
Melodies from great tree monarchs
Standing in their strength unseared,
Only those who sit and listen
By the restful hearthfire's gleam
Hear the songs that lead the fancy
Spellbound in a happy dream.

All the carols of the summer
Murmur from the forest's sheen
Where the backlog learned its singing,
Swaying with the boughs of green,
There it heard the songs from heaven,
Heard the south wind whisper low
Midst the scenes that seem to linger
Sunleaked in the embers' glow.

With the flitting flames and shadows
Visions come and disappear;
Fair, loved faces of the missed ones
In the twilight hover near,
Fondest hopes long since abandoned
Come again with fresh, new life—
Far away in wintry tempest
Lies the world of care and strife.

GARDEN SECRETS.

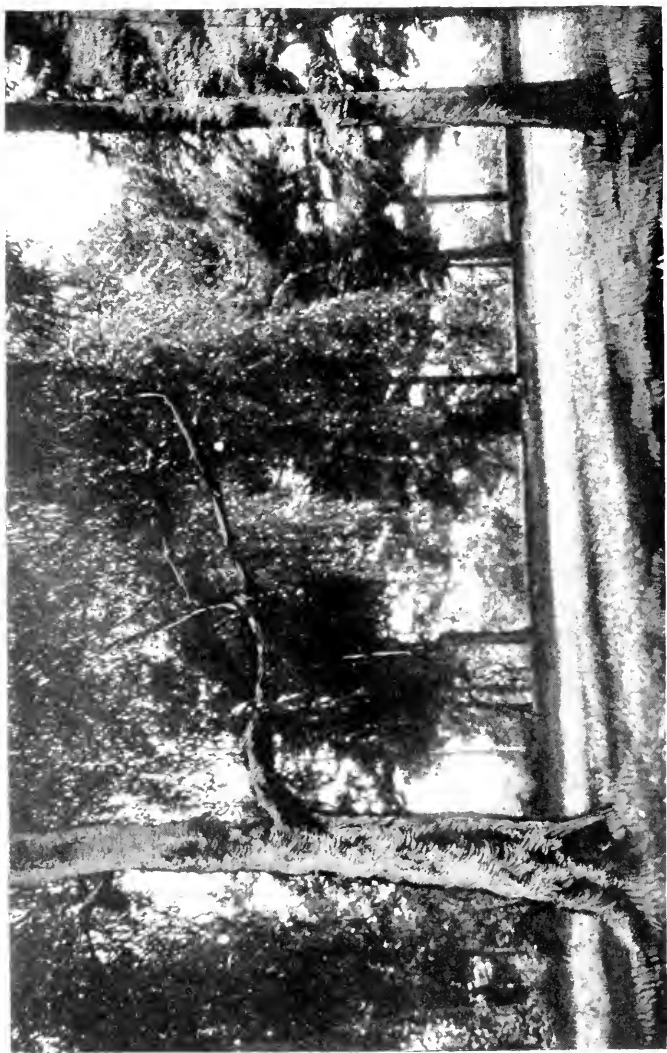
If the truth be known
The fairies alone
The garden secrets know.
O, if one would alight
By me in its flight
O'er blossoms, to and fro!

I would say, "O stay! Don't hurry away.
My dear Miss Shining Wings,
Won't you stop for repose and sit on this rose
That rocked by breezes swings?
In the garden here is much that's queer,
And fairies are so wise.
Would there be any harm in lending your charm
To help my mortal eyes?"

"I should like to see where dreams can be
That poppies hide away,
And to take a sly peep where daisies keep
The words their petals say,
And I long to glance at you when you dance
And lady slippers wear.
Are they easily torn? Do they ever get worn
In tripping through the air?"

"With your charm, my ear may learn how to hear
What pansies have to tell;
Ah, so much they have thought, no longer they ought
In silent mood to dwell.
Tell me how, O please, to find their heart's ease,
Will they give a bit to me?
Does the faint ting-a-ling of the blue bells' ring
Call fairies home to tea?"

"Does their tinkle low make four o'clocks know
Their waking time each day?
Will a snapdragon bite? Do you think it right
To pinch one just in play?
Are those pretty things, the flowers with wings,
Contented on their stem?
Do butterflies tease the fluttered sweet peas
To fly away with them?"



I have looked all day
Where blossoms were gay,
For dainty, flitting wings :
I have searched in the night
But never caught sight
Of fairies that know these things

GLAD DAYS.

Some days bring happiness along,
Each flying hour is full of song,
We know not why.

The world wears radiance that's new,
Far deeper is the tint of blue
Spread o'er the sky.

The mingled sounds that fill the air
Have in our mood a happy share,
And sweet reply

From countless friendly voices sings :
Some charm a welcome message brings
From all that's nigh.

Perchance all shining, flitting things
Waft blithesome thoughts before their wings
That toward us fly.

O days that never come at call !
Their marvels in our pathways fall,
We know not why.

We list, surprised, to trill of bird,
As if the ear had never heard
So sweet a cry.

The cheer that's told in hum of bees,
The impulse brought by quickened breeze
Which hastens by.

Make some days seem of joy a part,
Till dreams of beauty fill the heart,
We know not why.

FACE THE SUNSHINE.

THE FIRST.

Though yesterday was dark with gloom,
When sorrow shadowed all thy way,
Till suffering and anguish rose
Clondlike to hide and blot out day,
And through thy heart swept loud refrain,
A tempest's song of grief and pain,

Seek not to-day to close thine eyes,
Nor backward look when earth's bright glows
Seem cruel mockery that comes
To follow smilingly thy woes,
While darkness lends thy soul relief
And gives sad welcome to thy grief.

Lift up thy tired, bowed head, dear one,
To face once more the shining light
That slowly, but so surely will
Dispel thy spirit's lengthened night,
Look up with dim, tear-blinded eyes
To see to-day's fair, dazzling skies.

Grief's darkness waits to hide all else
But self's strong, urgent claims,
Toward others will the chastened hopes
Of brightened hearts send out their aims,
Not now, but sometimes will the years
Show thee the joys smilt through tears.

Ere long the bruised and storm-tossed buds
Of struggling hope will show their hue,
With pure, sweet fragrance will unfold
Their blossoms and will find anew
The life and strength of all that lies
Beneath the glow of heaven's fair skies.

Turn toward the warmth of God's great love
To find new impulse for thy will
Till thou canst bid the jangled tones
Of sorrow's discord to be still,
While clouds of yesterday will roll
Beyond the dawn that greets thy soul.

THE PASSING SHOWER.

ARBOR LODGE.

From o'er the prairie the wind blows by,
The soft clouds float in the clear blue sky.
Afair, o'er meadows and fields of green,
The coming mist of the rain is seen.

Tall trees along the horizon stand;
Below is sinking the rolling land
In curving waves which fall and rise,
A tranquil, motionless sea it lies.

And down the slopes with their verdured tint
The shower comes, and the faintest glint
Of silver gleam from its somber gray
Is shining out from its fringing spray.

And up the hills where the corn fields grow,
O'er orchards slanting in fruitful row,
O'er parching earth with its furrows deep,
The fresh drops fall in their onward sweep.

They reach the woodland that curves between
The pasture cleft by the dark ravine,
And creep midst leaves as if sad to go
To paths that wind in the shade below.

The wet air comes like a swelling tide,
From great barn doors that are open wide
The farmer watches the bowing grain
That crowns his toil on the fertile plain.

From country homes, over hedged roads down,
The shower comes to the dusty town,
And pelts and tunelessly taps each pane
With rapid chime of a gay refrain.

Then, joining the turbid Missouri's sweep,
The darting drops in its current leap,
Borne on in flight o'er the basin land
To where, uprising, its outlines stand.

Still on beyond, o'er the distant view
Where hazy bluffs wear an opal hue,
The drifting cloud of a summer day
Melts out of sight in its fleeting way.

The sunbeams glance, when the rain has fled,
On lowly grasses with jewels spread,
And seek the gems in their hiding place
Within each flower's uplifted face.

The shining leaves and the trees upbear
A network radiant in the air.
The prairie smiles with the fresh, sweet power
Of new life brought by the passing shower.

KINSHIP WITH THE TREES.

ARBOR LODGE.

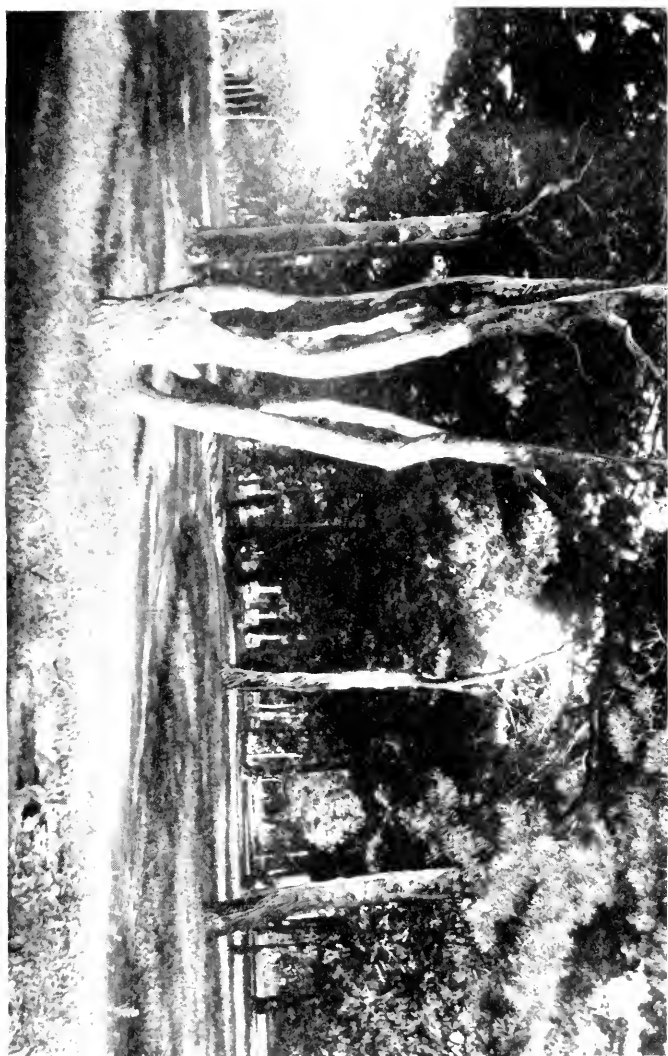
Beneath the far-outreaching arch of boughs
That sweep with majesty on high
Some potent charm the human heart endows
With joy that shares the grandeur nigh.

A joy that feels the strong and subtle bond
That draws it with a kinship's tie
To wait and list while all the trees respond
With sweet companionship's reply.

Within the trees there springs the eager life
That works, unscen, with wondrous care,
That fills their cells with strength and vigor rife
From roots to highest twigs in air;

That brings the yearly store for solid grain,
Built ever outward, ring by ring,
While upward, for the gifts from sun and air,
The boughs their open leaflets fling.

They stand like stalwart men whose cradled days
Were blessed with fair environment,
Whose minds unfolded in the happy ways
Where all the best of life was blent.





Till added grace and force and wisdom's gain
Built characters that rose sublime
To meet unmoved the storms that sweep in vain
To check the growth that comes with time.

With rugged, broken bark or scars' deep trace
The trees wear marks of force within,
Like lines that mirror on the human face
The hearts' pure thoughts, or stain of sin.

In shaded roads or in the woodland way,
When on the trees shines morning's beam
Or glows the mellow light of golden day
Or when the moon lends silver gleam.

Alluring witchery pervades the air,
A friendly spirit lurks in each soft breeze
And calls the heart to feel the tie that's there,
The bond of kinship with the trees.

— — —

SIMPLE TREASURES.

Was ever lofty mount so high
Among the Alpine ranges
As Grandsire's woodpile, still in sight
Beyond the long years' changes!
Were ever braver tourists known
Than we whose hearts were quaking
While climbing up with slipping feet
That kept the sticks all shaking.

Till there we sat perched on the top
In breathless joy and pleasure,
Such happy lads and lassies 'midst
A store of simple treasure.
We tore the crackling shagbark up
In pieces long and brittle:
Soft bits for boats from cottonwood
Were broken off to whittle.

Beneath the bark the logs were white
And smooth like satin lining;
Above lay flecks of velvet moss
Like jewels in their shining,
When o'er the rough pile's jagged edge
Our eager eyes tried peeping,
Like honey lay the drops of sap
From out the new logs creeping.

About us was our childish world,
The lane that seemed ne'er ending,
The corn house near, the great red barn
Where joys untold were blending,
We smiled down at the clucking hens
With tiny chicks of yellow,
And jeered the gobbler as he passed,
A strutting, cross old fellow.

Sweet forest odors filled the air
Like those we met when playing
That we were Gypsy vagrants bold
And through the woods went straying,
Ah, well-a-day! We still look back
Like wistful lads and lassies
And smile e'en though that woodpile stands
Before our tear-dimmed glasses.

— — — — —

TO-DAY.

O beautiful To-day!
How fleeting is thy sway!
Thou art here with treasure
No heart can measure,
And then thou art away.

We heed thee not, perchance,
But backward turn our glance,
And we sigh with grieving,
Past joys perceiving
That loss doth but enhance.

And yet we surely know
Thou comest to bestow
Precious hours for using,
And time for choosing
Our harvest seed to sow.

No future days reveal
That, hidden by God's seal,
Which they have in keeping,
Although with weeping
To them we oft appeal.

But thou, To-day, we see!
O, dull our hearts must be,
If we grasp not duty
And miss the beauty
Of moments brought with thee.

Thou fragment of all time!
Within each swift hour's chime
Thou hast safe in holding
The fresh unfolding
Of Heaven's truths sublime.

THE GRACE OF SILENCE.

Of all the graces that we seek
To make our lives complete,
Not one more heavenly beauty wears
Nor shines with light more sweet
Than the true grace which seals the lips
And checks the words that spring
With careless mirth or bitter scorn,
Until the tongue is lashed to fling
A taunt to one who turns from good
And falls in life's swift rush—
Ah then, O lips, in silence wait;
The loving Father bids thee hush.

The one who wanders may have trod
So thoughtlessly along,
Too eagerly, too far led on
By pleasure's subtle song,
Or burdened with a hidden woe
Some saddened hearts may ache
Until their weary, blinded eyes
See not the path they take,
Ah, who so perfect as to feel
No penitential blush?
O kingly words of Christ! "Judge not."
Close lips, God's mercy bids thee hush.

A FROLIC IN THE TREE TOPS.

They're having the funniest time to-night
High up in the tops of the trees;
There's a quick little rush and a gay little stir
And a blithe little song from the breeze.
A group of old friends on the lawn they stand,
The maples, the elms and the oaks,
With their boughs all entwined they are shaking
their heads
And they seem to be whispering jokes.
All day, with the light of the sun above,
The leaves were as still as could be,
In their pretty green robes they were hanging asleep
Or they drowsily nodded to me.
But now in a twitter they move about,
The branches toss up in unrest;
There is danger, I fear, of their waking the birds,
Who have gone long ago to the nest.
There may be a dance 'mid the swinging boughs,
Perhaps there's a quarrel! Who knows?
For the moon's looking down as if trying to frown
At the mischief she sees, I suppose.
They whisk to and fro and they sway aside;
The leaves seem to laugh with the breeze.
There's a rustling of fun and of frolic to-night
All around in the tops of the trees.



RAB.

ARBOR LODGE.

What does he think of, my Scotch collie?
He looks so far away
With searching eyes so deep, so speaking
With words he cannot say.

Across the wide and rolling prairie
We two together walk
In fond companionship, two comrades
Whose hearts together talk.

He looks at me with comprehension
Of all my love for him,
While in his face glows such affection.
It makes my eyes grow dim.

And when I pat his head and smiling
Bend down to scan his face,
It brightens like a sunbeam shining—
Then off we go at rapid pace.

To roam on plains of fair Nebraska.
To wander through ravine,
To climb the sloping hilltop's summit
And look beyond o'er waves of green.

Up there, my Rab seems lost in thinking
And looks so far, so far
Away, like sculptured statue standing.
Silent, lest the scene I mar,

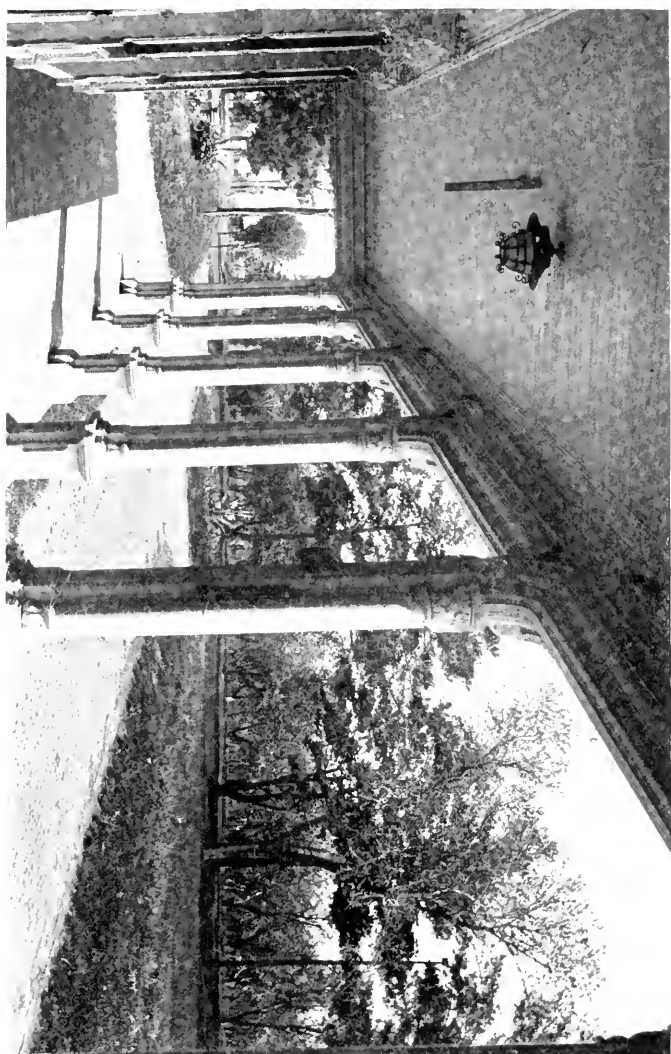
I stand beside him, feeling, knowing
Where all his thoughts must be,
And mine go, too, to "Bonnie Scotland."
Our home-land o'er the sea.

I see the hills of blooming heather,
I hear the shepherd's cry,
And feel the bracing air of Highlands
That proudly greet the sky.

And like a flood comes sweep of visions,
The gathered clans appear
In gayest hues and plaids of tartan,
The chieftain's plumes are near.
Hark! lowland shrill the bagpipe's calling,
The herald's shout alarms,
And Scottish heroes come with springing
To lead their hosts to arms.
The warlike pictures fade and vanish,
The air is filled with song,
The harper sings of love and glory
In ballads quaint and long.
And then the strains grow faint and fainter
Like tales of ancient lore;
Soft whispered calls come up from woodlands
And we are back once more.
Again amidst the roll of prairies,
We're in the sun-lit land,
And "Rab," I say, and Rab looks toward me
And—well, we understand!
We've both been roaming o'er the heather,
Both hearts the charm have felt
And love that drew us to the Highlands
Where once our fathers dwelt.

AN INVITATION.

Within the calm seclusion
Among the quiet nooks
Where wait the friendly faces
Of long-familiar books,
I turn the poet's pages
And read the quaint words o'er,
When, with the faintest whisper,
A zephyr swings the door.





Once more the past attracts me
 To journey by the side
 Of pilgrims who "in felaweschipe
 Toward Caunterbury ryde."
 When lo, a wave of fragrance
 Sweeps through the ancient lore!
 With whiffs of wild rose perfume
 The zephyr swings the door.

 As if the gentle Chaucer,
 Who loved all Nature well,
 Still wandered forth in spirit,
 Enchanted by her spell,
 And sent his voice which lingered
 From ages gone before
 To join a pleading zephyr
 That softly swings the door.

 It swings to show a glimmer
 Of rippling waters flow,
 Of white-sailed visions fleeting
 And drifting clouds of snow;
 Of woodlands green where quiet
 Is held with peace in store;
 With subtle plea alluring,
 The zephyr swings the door.

 Fleet fancy opens swiftly
 The portals of the years;
 Afar, in shining meadows,
 The poet's form appears,
 Away from courtly splendors
 To scenes that charmed him more,
 He beckons one to follow
 When fancy swings the door.

 To follow where, mid daisies,
 In eager joy he went
 To seek in lonely pathways
 His deepest heart's content;
 Where words began their singing
 To echo o'er and o'er,
 Into the realm of Nature
 He swung the poet's door.

From verdant arches rising
Where forest shadows sleep,
From fields o'erspread with sunlight,
From banks where flowers creep,
Still calls his voice inviting
Grave eyes from bookish lore
To wander forth with Nature
When zephyrs swing the door.

— — — — —
MORNING GLORIES.

O children dear, awake betimes
To hear the morning glory chimes!
At break of day
They ring for play,
And sweetly call, "Come, don't be late
When all the joys of morning wait."

Up, ever upward toward the sun
The morning glories swiftly run.
They climb and fling
Their bells to swing
Far over all the lovely heads
Of flowers in the garden beds.

They've trailed their leaves beyond the ground
And twined the old rail fence around,
They've covered all
The gate post tall,
And hung the broken tree with green
Until its bark can scarce be seen.

All dressed in colors like the sky
They've crept above the lattice high.
"The world is bright
With golden light;
O come and see its shining hue!"
Ring out the bells of palest blue.

O listen, while the faint chimes steal
Above us in a sunrise peal!
 "The dewdrops here
 Are fresh and clear,"
Call bells that swing in robes of pink,
"Come out and see the flowers drink!"

"A silver web the spider weaves
And fastens it among my leaves.
 It hangs in air
 And looks so fair,
The pretty lace was made last night,"
Sing swaying bells of snowy white.

The fairies say, I've understood,
That only children who are good
 And sweet and dear
 This chiming hear.
For them alone the blossoms sing
And bells of morning glories ring.

A RIDE IN THE OLD STREET CAR.

NEBRASKA CITY.

Away from the scenes of traffic's whirl,
 Where the road goes sloping down
To meet the flowing river's blue
 That lies below the town,
The old street car goes jogging on
 Like a rambler on his way,
Who pauses here and loiters there,
 And yet seems loth to stay.

From out its eastern door we see
 The bluffs that melt away
In distant haze to softly gleam
 With jeweled tints of day;
And toward the wide, out-spreading west
 The peaceful country lies,
With glints of gold, the meadows green
 Curve under azure skies.

Drawn on by mules whose tinkling bells
Sing out a plaintive air,
Unmindful that the old brown car
Shows marks of grim Time's wear,
We sit content and dream out dreams
That come with summer hours,
And wonder if a heavenly land
Could be more fair than ours.

Perchance, in thought, we see again
The long, white-canvased trains
Of pioneers who passed this way
To cross far-reaching plains,
Like phantoms from the by-gone years
They come and pass from view,—
O brave hearts journeyed to the west
When this old town was new!

Beyond the wheat-fields, toward the south,
God's Acre crowns the hill—
There sleep our dearest, left alone
Where all is hushed and still,
But from the old car's windows
We see the sunbeams lie
Where shining stones point upward,
With promise, to the sky.

So back and forth it goes each day,
From flowing river's brim
To haunts of birds in shadowed grove
Whose quiet paths are dim,
Through traffic's stir, by hillside still,
The old car jogs along
And one who sits within may hear
Life's varied strains of song.



MARCH WINDS.

ARBOR LODGE.

O, the roaring, boisterous, loud March wind!
How it bows the gaunt tree tops!
How it sweeps the fields till the dry stalks clash!
How its voice in moaning drops
 Till it shrieks and wails
 O'er the mournful tales
That it tells in the chimneys tall!
 With turbulent might
 Roars the wind at night,
With furious, wrathful call.

O, the merry, frolicsome, wild March wind!
How it blows across the plain
With a rush and whirl and a cheery cry
Like the ring of a gay refrain!
 O, it thrills dull hearts
 Till their sloth departs
And the toils and the hopes grow bright,
 "Again to the strife
 With a fresh new life!"
It sings in the spring's clear light.

There's a gentle tone in its soft low voice
As the March wind slowly creeps
Through the quiet air, with a call so faint
O'er the place where the snow drop sleeps.
 O, it moves along
 With a subtle song!
When it lingers among the firs
 To whisper that spring
 Will their new leaves bring,
Each tree in its rapture stirs.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

~*~

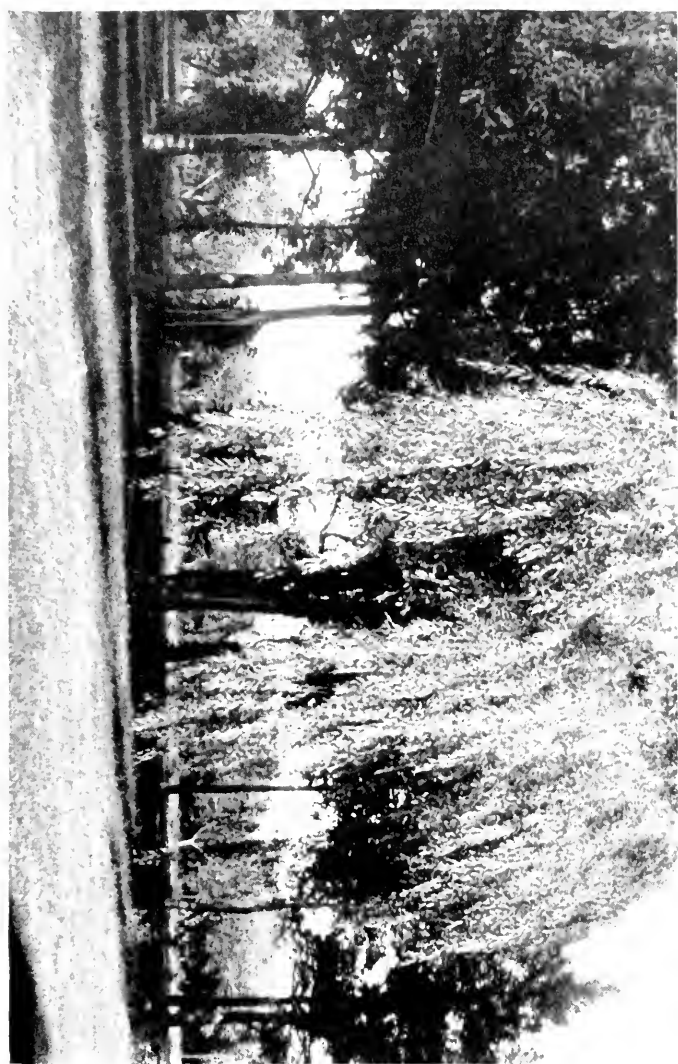
In the springtime, bright and breezy,
On a May day, clear and fair,
Stood a bonnie maiden, smiling,
With the sunshine on her hair,
And her eyes were lifted upward
To the blossoms overhead,
With a happy look of wonder;
Joyous were the words she said:

"Apple blossoms, apple blossoms,
O, I know, and know it well,
As you're swaying just above me,
Something sweet you have to tell,
Can you guess of whom I'm dreaming,
Guess the name I dare not speak?"
All the pink within the blossoms
Was reflected on her cheek.

Clustered branches bent around her,
Waiting buds hung o'er her way,
While her joy was shyly whispered
To the flowers of the May.
"Apple blossoms, apple blossoms,
How your fragrance fills the air!
Just as love, so true and tender,
Maketh all my life most fair."

When again upon the blossoms
Gazed the pretty little maid,
Fled were blush and smile of greeting,
Sad her eyes with pensive shade,
As in plaintive tone she murmured,
"It was all a dream. Ah me!"
Silently the white leaves downward
Fell like teardrops from the tree.

Roguish Cupid oft lies hidden
In an orchard's charming maze;
But his arrows aimed through flowers
Youthful hearts will only graze,
Springtime love so oft, like blossoms,
Short-lived, flutters but to die;
Like the petals, off it flutters
When a fitful breeze blows by.



GRANDMOTHER'S LAST SPINNING.

Her well spent seventy years were o'er
When she cried, "Let me have my wheel once more;
My spinning wheel from the garret bring,
I fain would hear its dear voice sing."

Well pleased she smiled when the wheel was found
And again at her touch began its round;
With sweet content and with movement slow
She walked beside it, to and fro.

Her face was bright as if joy of youth
Had returned to adorn its strength and truth;
With silver gleam curved the hair, snow white,
Above her brown eyes' eager light.

We know that, borne by the years, ere long
She would listen, enrapt, to the angels' song;
Our hearts' deep love had a startled thrill
Of wonder that we kept her still.

She paused, as if knowing our thoughts, to say,
"No, my children, I cannot always stay.
So oft through life I have been bereft,
So many gone! So few are left!"

"His will be done who died to save,
But I hope ne'er to see another grave;
I would go soon and in rest abide
To welcome you at eventide."

And well her radiant face portrayed
That her thoughts to the "many mansions" strayed;
With peace that only God's children feel
She turned again to her spinning wheel.

In its low hum to her heedful ears
Was a tender refrain of bygone years;
Of haunts she knew and loved it told,
Familiar tones it seemed to hold.

Of mirth and laughter, of children's glee,
Of voices that called her again to see
The faces shining with love-light fair,
The sunny gleams of wavy hair.

So plain, so real, to her they seemed
All the present was lost, she fondly dreamed
Of her young life on the dear old farm
'Mid hallowed ties of home's sweet charm.

The wheel sang on till its plaintive sound
Told of many a low and grassy mound;
Her heart away from its hum and whirl
Was led beyond the "gates of pearl."

The setting sun sent its parting rays;
As they lighted the room with golden haze
They softly fell on the tear-dimmed eyes,
And grandmother paused in mild surprise.

The wheel's song ceased as she dropped her hand,
And she spoke as if all her household band
From earth and heaven were at her side;
"Yes, we shall meet at eventide."

SUNSET.

ARBOR LODGE.

White, snow white is the glittering ground
Stretching afar in the prairie land;
The fierce winds sing o'er the hidden paths
That wind where the lonely woodlands stand.
Cold and grave is the mist of blue
Shrouding the hills where they meet the sky;
Beneath the desolate orchard's brown
And bare woven boughs the shadows lie.

Slowly dawning a radiance breaks,
Shining through dusk of the somber West
Till dazzling sunbeams gather in throngs
To follow the day's last hour to rest.
Clouds that loitered with shadowing veil
Swept from the sun, draw their folds aside
As if a home for the weary world
Were opened with all its portals wide;
Outward, welcoming warm light falls,
Gleaming like fireside flashings of gold,
To call the desolate children of earth
Away from the night time gloom and cold.

THE KITCHEN BALL.

The ground was white with drifting snow
 Beneath the cloudy sky,
And cold and chill, with bitter blast,
 The wintry wind swept by.

Within the farm house, quaint and old,
 The kitchen fire burned low,
And from the open chimney shone
 With warm and fitful glow.

The kettle sat in mild content
 Upon the hearth that night,
And, suddenly, in gleeful way
 It sang with all its might.

When louder shrieked the wind without,
 The kettle chimed within,
Till through the room were ringing sounds
 Of such a merry din

That all the shining little sparks,
 In eager, restless play,
Went dancing, dancing in the air,
 With gleam and twinkle gay.

And quickly flames went darting up
 The chimney, wide and deep;
Still higher, higher up they flew
 With wild and joyous leap.

Across the smooth, long, yellow floor
 The flying shadows sped;
Upon the ceiling, o'er the wall,
 The twilight dance they led.

They sprang from out the corners dim,
 They darted swiftly round,
And, lightly flitting to and fro,
 In gliding chase they wound.

They danced around the sleeping puss,
 Who, curled up in a chair,
Ne'er dreamed that merry shadows sly
 Were joined in frolic there.

But, wide awake upon its shelf,
The clock stood in its place
And, marking time with steady ticks,
Looked down with cheerful face.

But not a sound of softest tread
Within the room was heard,
No voices rang in mirthful laugh
Or breathed in whispered word.

O, long the tireless dancers flew—
The flames and shadows tall;
So still they were that no one knew
They led the kitchen ball.

THE SPELLBOUND SLEEPERS.

When pretty green grasses creep out of the ground
And look up to see if the sun is around,
Then old King Winter falls fast asleep,
His slumbers are long and sound and deep.
He sleeps through the springtime bright and gay,
Through winds of the March and blossoms of May,
He sleeps while the roses are nodding their heads
To little blue violets down in their beds,
Not even a dream of the birds has he
As they flutter and sing so merrily;
Nor of brooks that ripple and dance all day
Through meadows and woods where children play.

Naught knows he of the golden sheaves,
Of the ripened fruit or the falling leaves
That turn from green into scarlet gay
And off on the breezes float away.
Poor Winter King! If he only knew
How summer days look with skies of blue!
O, wouldn't he have a great surprise
On a sweet June day, if he'd open his eyes!

Away to the Dreamland, calm and still,
Fair Summer lies when the days grow chill,
And little Jack Frost in a mischievous way
Throws over her train just a twinkle of spray;
So she's off for a sleep when the winds are bold
And sing of the fierce and bitter cold.
Then Winter holds rein through the starlit night,
And, waving his scepter in morning light,
He scatters about from his casket rare
His jewels to shine in the silvery air,
And smiles as they sparkle and flash and gleam
From ice-covered tree and frozen stream.

With her head at rest in a roseleaf cap
The beautiful Summer goes on with her nap,
And she'll never know how the snowflakes fall,
How sleighbells jingle and coasters call,
And children are laughing when comes the cheer
Of Merry Christmas and glad New Year.
O, wouldn't this sleeper be greatly amazed
If ever her eyes on a snowstorm gazed!

THE THRESHOLD.

The slender threshold bar there lies
Between the great, wide world and mine,
Before the realm of rest and peace
It holds its strong and steadfast line,
And none, unbidden, cross beyond,
A stern defense its presence yields;
With strength as of a mighty host
The guarded sphere of home it shields.

And only memories come in
To bring their welcome guests at will,
Whose footsteps wander in and out
Or wait and linger on the sill.
In never-ceasing-line they come
From out shadowed years long flown;
In never ceasing line they go
Beyond the threshold once their own.

When quiet hours bring waking dreams
The grave ancestral guests appear,
A throng whose eyes seem ever more
To rest where ties of home were dear.
And fancy calls the pictured forms
To fill the space within the door;
Their watchful faces smile above
The slender bit of oaken floor.

Their treasured words that time has stored
In hoarded fragments, brief and rare,
The records of their noblest deeds,
Seem whispered in the hallowed air,
Until the plain, long-trodden bar
Becomes a sacred household shrine;
Fond thoughts cross o'er it with the dead
To threshold of the life divine.

TO DELLA, IN HER YELLOW GOWN.

ARTHUR LODGE.

In the early summer morning's light
She swept the dewdrops down
From the drooping boughs and jeweled grass
That brushed her yellow gown,
As along the orchard's winding path
She walked with tranquil grace
Like a Ceres seeking harvests' gold,
With watchful, smiling face.

O the lawn lay green and stretched before
Her feet its shining way,
And she crossed it like a vision bright,
A sunbeam of the day;
Or a mystic damsel brought, perchance,
By weird Maddin's charm
To wander in her gleaming robes
About a quiet farm.

And the dazzling sky held up its blue,
The arching trees bent down
Till in sylvan frame the dark-eyed maid
Shone out in yellow gown,
Like a Moorish princess from afar
Whose shrouding veil was lost,
Or a pictured form from Art's fair realm,
With Nature's gems embossed.

Like a glowing flower was the face
Above the yellow gown,
With the petals' velvet on the cheek
And on her dusky crown.
All the golden pansies growing low
Looked up as she drew near,
And their glances told their secret thought:
"One like ourselves is here."

QUIET PATHS.

There are quiet paths in life
That lie in ways unseen.
Sometimes they lead through haunts of peace,
Where harvest fields are green.

Like the hidden streams that run
Beneath the dark earth's breast,
They oft unheeded wind below
The busy world's unrest.

O'er the quiet paths of life
Cross eager, jostling throngs
Of men intent on selfish needs
Or overcome by wrongs.

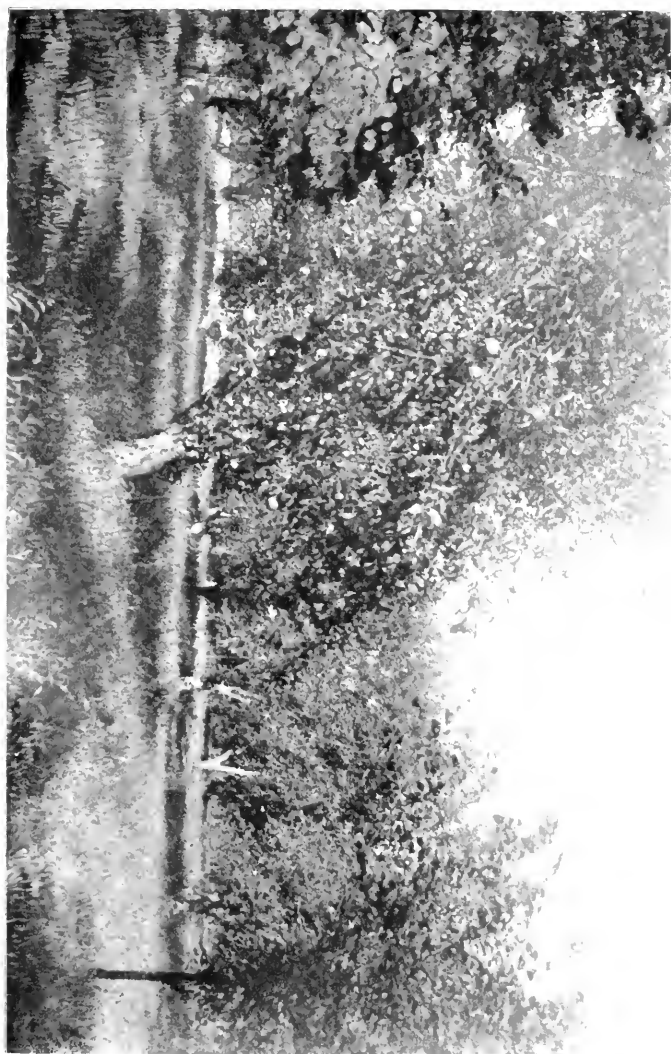
And the souls who seek for good
And men with weary feet
And sinful ones who shrink from light,
Here welcome greetings meet.

Here the little children grasp
Firm hands and know fond care,
Here tender arms lift straying feet
Away from harm and snare.
And the aged ones who come
With steps grown weak by years,
Find staffs in paths where pilgrims pass
With smiles to banish tears.
For in quiet ways that run
'Midst human hearts' great needs
Is seen beside each footprint left
Fair blossoming of deeds.
Where the pilgrim's onward step,
Their souls by faith made strong,
And move to melodies that chant
Their trusting hearts' true song.
But the songs are low and hushed,
God, only, hears their tone
And listens to the steadfast strains,
The singing of His own.

A FLUTTER OF WINGS.

ARBOR LODGE.

The orchard is shining and glowing to-day
With butterfly wings that are ceaseless at play.
There's yellow above and there's yellow below
And flitting about of a glimmer of snow;
Amidst the green tangle of tall heads of grass
The radiant flashings of red gleamings pass.
The boughs of the trees are low bending to hold
The ripe harvest apples just turning to gold.
And downward from branches the butterflies sweep,
Like leaves of the autumn that fall to their sleep.



O hither and yon, as if blown by a sprite,
The delicate wings rise and droop in their flight.
Just poised for a moment their airy wave stops
To linger and sway o'er the pink clover tops.
A stray humming bird with a flash passes by,
The noisy black bee with its buzzing comes nigh;
Uplifted the wings that the fragile forms bear,
Like bits of a rainbow they shine in the air.
With darting and flitting the orchard is gay
While sunbeams and butterflies silently play.

THE SINGING RIVER.

RIVER RAISIN, MONROE, MICH.

Sweet melodies are echoing
Through mists of joy and tears,
They come again, again repeat
The songs that time endears,
That sound through distant years.
And ever with their voices dim
One song rings o'er and o'er,
The song the little river sang
To homes beside its shore,
In days that are no more.
The winding, curving river's flow
That came from out the west
With roselit waves and golden tinge
Of sunset on its breast,
And sang in twilight's rest.
It parted where an island stood
With somber fringe of pine
And toward the north and toward the south
It sang at day's decline,
With singing ran each line

To join in rippling near the wall
Where stood the convent gray,
And mingle with the quiet tones
Of nuns who knelt to pray
To God at close of day.

Beside the Frenchtown battleground
The sloping banks bent low
And heard an echo from the past,
A dirge for those who long ago
Were slain in strife in old Monroe.

Below the bridges in the town
It softly murmured by
And joined the mothers' evening song
Of tender lullaby,
While darker grew the sky.

Beneath the stars reflected light
Its voice grew bold at night,
The fishermen sang o'er their nets
And toiled in changeful light
Where lamplit shores were bright.

And with them sang the river low
Above its bed of stone,
Then swept between the vineyards dark
With gentle, plaintive tone,
And, shadowed, sang alone.

Now evermore the river flows
From westward to the sea,
The rippling, singing river calls
With sighing or with glee
From out the years to me.





THE LITTLE MAID ORDERS A SONG.

"O write me a song," said a little maid;

"O write me a song, I pray,
To sing when under the elm tree's shade
I swing on a summer day,

And put in words
That tell of birds,
And speak of the hum of bees,

And butterfly wings
And flying things—
O do say much about these!

Of them all I'll sing
In my elm tree swing."

"And tell how tassels in corn husks grow,

How I slide down the great hay mows;
How Rover runs when each night I go
To watch while he brings the cows,

And say 'tis plain
The peacock's vain
Of strutting to show its fan;

And say the sky
Is blue and high—
O, please write all that you can!
And the words I'll sing
In my elm tree swing."

"And then, you may tell of the roses sweet

And lilies that grow up tall;
How little lambs in the pastures bleat
And hens to their chickens call,

Just write in rhyme
Of summer time,
And say that I love each day;

And pick out a tune
To sing in June,
A happy tune for my play.
With the birds I'll sing
In my elm tree swing."

SORROW'S GIFT.

There must be times when sorrow cometh to us,
All else must wait while she her message brings;
All hearts must bow through moments of her staying
While o'er the sight her somber veil she flings.

Bright joys depart beyond our clouded vision,
Gleaming and fair they seem but shadows dim.
Sunlight is drear when sorrow cometh to us
Bearing a cup embittered to the brim.

Always alone we take whate'er she bringeth,
Anguish and pain that each alone must bear.
Always alone each heart must enter darkness,
Groping, it shrinks from all that's hidden there.

There must be times when sorrow cometh to us!
Broken and crushed our spirits weary lie;
Long will she dwell near pathways she has shadowed,
Oft will return to breathe again a sigh.

Yet, with her touch there falls a heavenly sweetness
Filling the heart that once beside her lives;
Sweetness that grows to love for all the stricken;
Tenderness springs from out the woe she gives.

"AFTERNOON LADIES."

When toward the west the sun descends
Till tinge of gold with shadow blends,
And calm are mellowed hours of day,
In oriental colors gay
The four-o'clocks are opened wide
To give fresh bloom to eventide.

In plain, old-fashioned yards they grow,
And yet, in softened sunlight's glow,
The mingled green of spreading leaves,
With petaled red and yellow, weaves
A web, fantastic with their bloom,
Like fabrics from weird Indies' loom.

From hedgelike rows their flowers gleam
Till nightfall comes with shade and dream.
Belated children of the day,
Whose birthplace is so far away,
You look like dames with sprightly air,
Whose robes a foreign tinting wear.
Sweet "ladies of the afternoon,"
Your buds, awakened, are the boon
That brings to closing day a grace.
What mystic charm calls up each face
To brightly smile while shadows creep
To veil the summer hours with sleep?

THE GHOST DANCE.

ARBOR LODGE.

Between the dark, uneven lines
Of trees in the low ravine
The rising moon has sent its rays,
Till now no longer intervene
The veiling boughs: above, it shines
And greets the distant grove of pines.
And here and far away the land,
Awaiting the bright moon's quest,
Rolls out its plains. The searching light
Illumines scenes of strange unrest.
The chill November wind makes moan,
The vanished years sigh through its tone.
For all sweet, faded summers gone
Have left, in their dying, strains
That o'er and o'er ring out to-night,
Re-echoing in sad refrains,
And fair Nebraska's prairies lie
A trysting place where spirits cry.
Out yonder in the silvered field
Where once, in the bygone days,
With flash of tomahawks swung high,
The red man sought in savage ways
To celebrate a treaty signed,
With war dance on the land resigned.

The noiseless shadows lurk below
The trees, as their branches sway,
Like lithe, dark forms of Otoe braves
In groups of stealthy foes at bay,
Just where the old field's margins creep
To new-grown woodland's shading deep.

And long white spaces, moonlit, lie,
Like ghosts of the slain in strife,
Wan heroes from the silent band
That trod this prairie soil in life,
Like cry and wail of savage love,
The wind moans plaintively above.

It sings, and sweeps in mournful dirge
Through depths of the curved ravine,
And calls from hilltops where the pines
Approach the sky with somber green,
Till echo answers echo heard
Like some sad, mocking voice of bird.

With quickened rustle come the leaves
To rise when the wind pipes high,
From roadside ways and gathered drifts
Like specters through the air they fly,
Or ghostly steps their flitting trace,
Each leaf is like a withered face

Which, seared by age, has come again
To look at the hunting ground,
Where shone the campfire's ruddy glow
And welcome was in wigwams found,
When Otoes dwelt long years ago
Beside the dull Missouri's flow.

Spellbound, the rolling prairie shines,
By notes of the wind harps led
The red man's specter joins in dance
With ghosts of all the summers dead,
While, calmly, o'er the weird unrest,
The moon moves slowly toward the West.

TO THE PUMPKIN.

Here's to the Pumpkin! The jolly old fellow
Who glows in the field with his coating of yellow!
Who stays on the vine when the meadows are browning
And cheerfully shines when the Heavens are frowning!

 The sensible fellow,
 Goes on getting mellow
Till sunlight of summer, stored in and reflected,
Shines out of his face at a time unexpected.

Minds that are gifted with keenest acumen
Must clearly perceive that to all who are human
The Pumpkin presents a most notable sample
Of what may be done by a steady example.

 He sticks to his duty!
 When all the fair beauty
Of woodland and prairie is slowly declining,
'Midst gloomy surroundings, he keeps up a shining.

Like one who so kind that he's ne'er apathetic
Brings cheer to his friends with a love sympathetic,
When troubles are mingled till joys seem departed,
By showing a face that is all sunny-hearted.

 So, quietly wiling,
 He's ever beguiling
The sorrowful mourner to think of the lining
That brightens the clouds where the sunlight is shining.

O Pumpkin, so plump and so sensible looking!
Staid Puritans dried thee on rafters for cooking;
Our forefathers prized thee for festal-day dining
And laughed when thy lantern-lit faces were shining.

 The charm of old stories,
 Of fairyland glories
When thou wert a coach, lends its gleam to thy yellow—
May coming years bring thee, still golden and mellow!

THE SILVER-LEAFED POPLAR.

ARBOR LODGE.

O, always the wind brings a whispering call
From out of the top of the poplar tall;
There steals through the air just a breath of song
To one drawing near to the silver-leaved throng,
"Come back! Come back!
From the world's sober ways,
Come back! for a glimpse of thy childhood days."

And back with the years I am under its shade,
The wondering eyes of a little maid
Look up at the strange, at the dazzling sight,
A tree that is shining in shimmering white,
A snow tree white!
These are robes for a queen
That rules o'er a marvelous realm of green!

Once more, all the leaves that are turning aside
Are gathered like knights for a frantic ride,
Who start with a tremble and quiver to go
Away with the music the singing winds blow
Away! Away!
Till their mantles fly out,
Their fluttering ermines all swing about

The childhood's bright fancies have lived through the years,
Still wonderful light in the poplar appears,
The flickering leaves turn their green and snow
Till shadows and sunlight are woven below
And still the wind,
Through the whispering throng,
Is calling me back with its breath of song.





THE WATCHMAN.

Swing and chime! Sleepy time!
Listen, little children dear!
Swing and chime! Sleepy time!
See, the night is drawing near.
Now, at closing of the day,
Dreamland bells ring far away.
No more frolic! No more play!
Swing and chime! Swing and chime!
Rings the Watchman looking down
From his tower in Sleepy Town.

Twinkling here, twinkling there,
Stars are shining in the sky.
Bright and round, bright and round.
The moon is coming by and by.
In the street the shadows fall,
Mothers' voices gently call,
Little birds in tree tops tall,
Half asleep, faintly peep,
While the Watchman's looking down
From his tower in Sleepy Town.

Swing and chime! Sleepy time!
O, how soft the bells and low,
Swing and chime! Sleepy time!
As to bed good children go,
The sun is hiding in the west,
Little ones must go to rest,
In a white and downy nest,
Swing and chime! Sleepy time!
Rings the Watchman looking down
From his tower in Sleepy Town.

"All is well! All is well!"
The Watchman's cry is clear and sweet.
He leaves the far-off silent bell
And smiling comes along the street.
Now, in and out he softly treads
And bends above the little beds
With fairy dreams for pretty heads.
"All is well! All is well!"
Cries the Watchman coming down
From his tower in Sleepy Town.

PLANT TREES.

ARBOR LODGE.

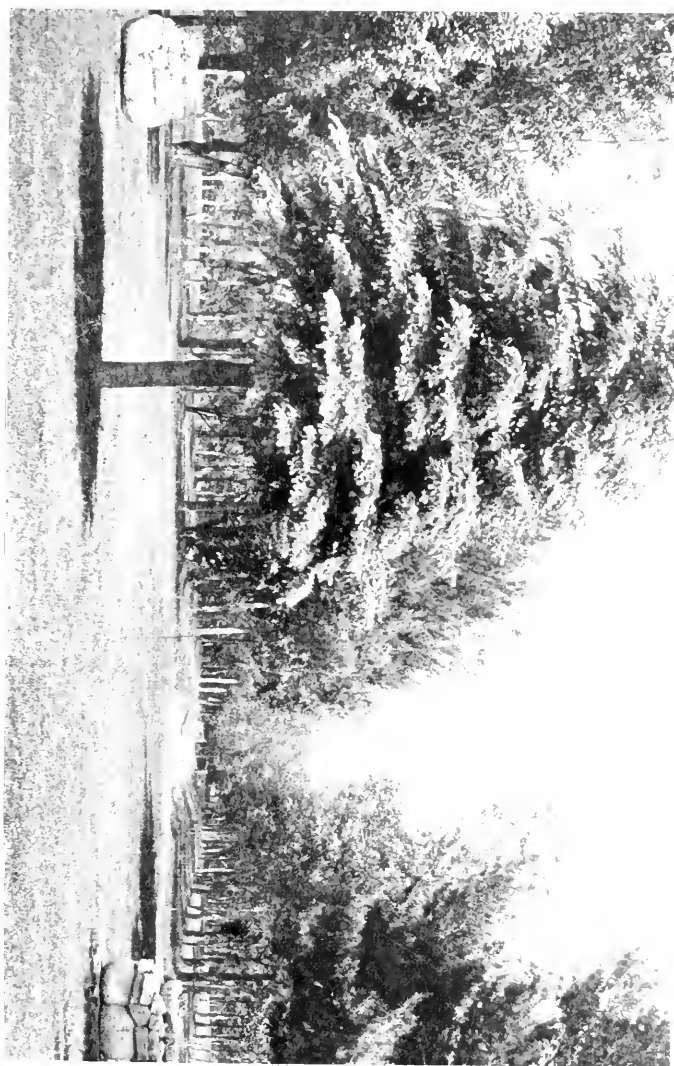
To one who thinks when he plants a tree
To live and thrive in brown earth's breast,
Come visions clear of the world's great space
Made glad with shadowed nooks for rest,
Where each green tree with its out-spread boughs
Has refuge for the weary made,
With sunlit gleams on its shining leaves
Has bent to guard its cooling shade.

To one who lists when he plants a tree
Come melodies so full, so sweet,
As if the years from the future called,
Though far away, their joys repeat:
As if the birds from the trees to come,
Beside each peaceful, sheltered nest,
Sang out their glee from the morning time,
Sang softly notes of evening rest.

To one who thinks when he plants a tree
A thousand joys spring into view,
His act, unselfish, will others bless
With gifts to make life glad anew,
From out the rootlets that lie below
A message to his heart will creep,
"Some day this deed will a harvest yield
When thou shalt with thy fathers sleep."

AFTERNOON.

The noon has passed; but earth is bright
With tender touch of summer's light;
And soft the air
O'er mellowed scenes that tranquil lie
Stretched out beneath the azure sky,
In beauty fair.



The trembling dew's of early day,
That glittered in each dawning ray,
Will shine no more,
The hours that morning's triumph led
Have with their buoyant freshness fled,
Their cheer is o'er.

And yet the day is newly blest ;
The happy sunlight falls with rest
And gentler beams,
And softer, sweeter are the clear
Bird notes that greet the ear,
Like songs in dreams.

Earth's beauty and its calm repose
Bring quiet thought that deeper grows.
In calm review,
We see the truth that hours have taught,
The latest moments are each fraught
With treasures new.

Beyond the noon the day's far spent,
A peaceful spirit of content
Now broods o'er all.
The ripened harvests round us lie ;
Ere long will glow the sunset sky
And night will fall.

But with the night comes restful sleep ;
And soon, when twilight shadows creep,
Will gleam and shine
For us the guiding lights above,
To show the Father's watchful love
O'er day's decline.



JUST VANISHING.

Ah! Where is summer? She was here
Just now with shimmering crown!
Beyond the hilltop she is near;
Or in the cornfields brown
Where rustling plumes appear.

This moment she was passing by,
And glows of radiant haze
And all the gayest tints that lie
O'er coming autumn's ways
Shone out as she went by.

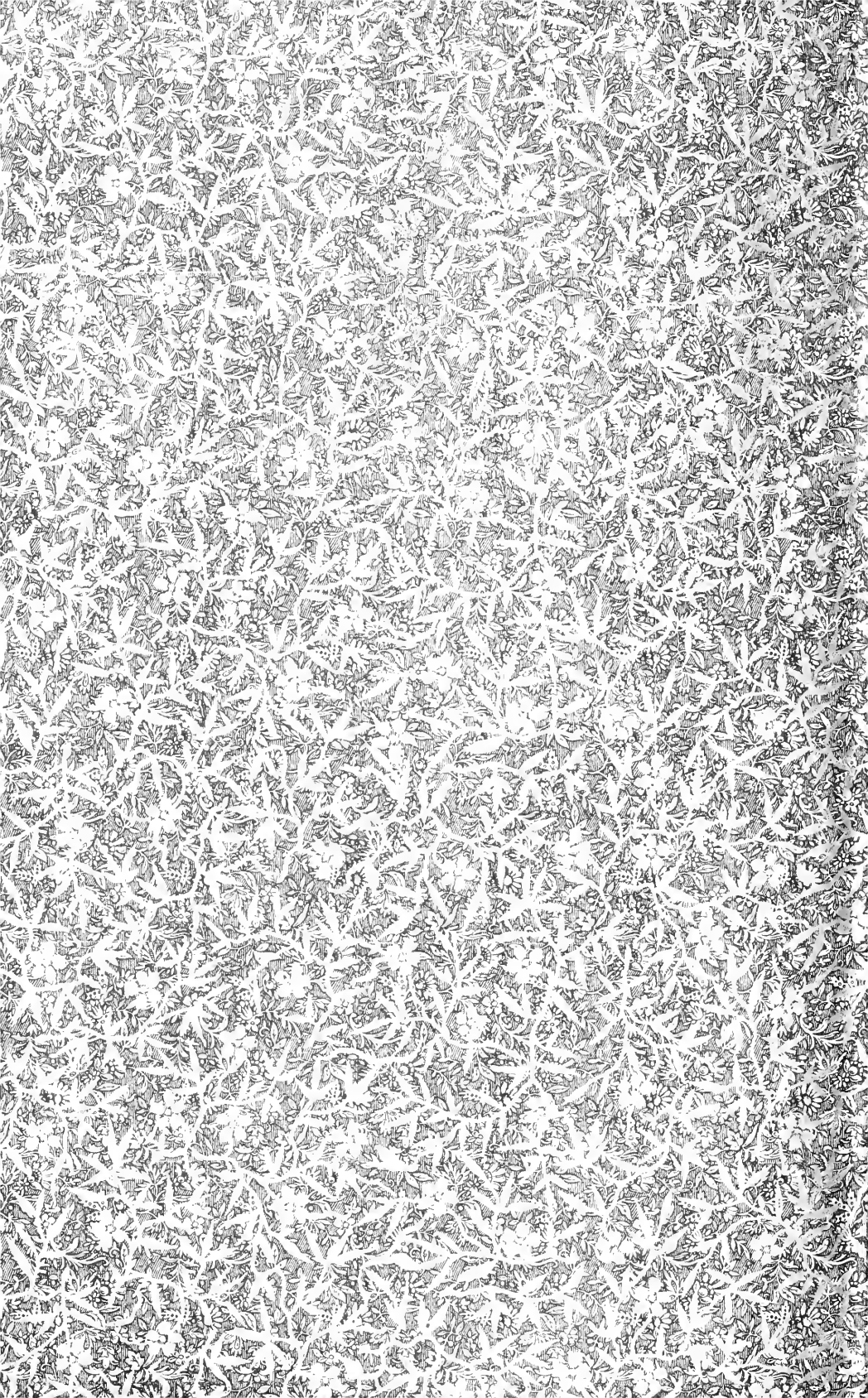
Not far away the summer goes,
Her voice with echoing calls
Where'er the singing river flows,
Where'er a flower falls,
In each soft wind that blows.

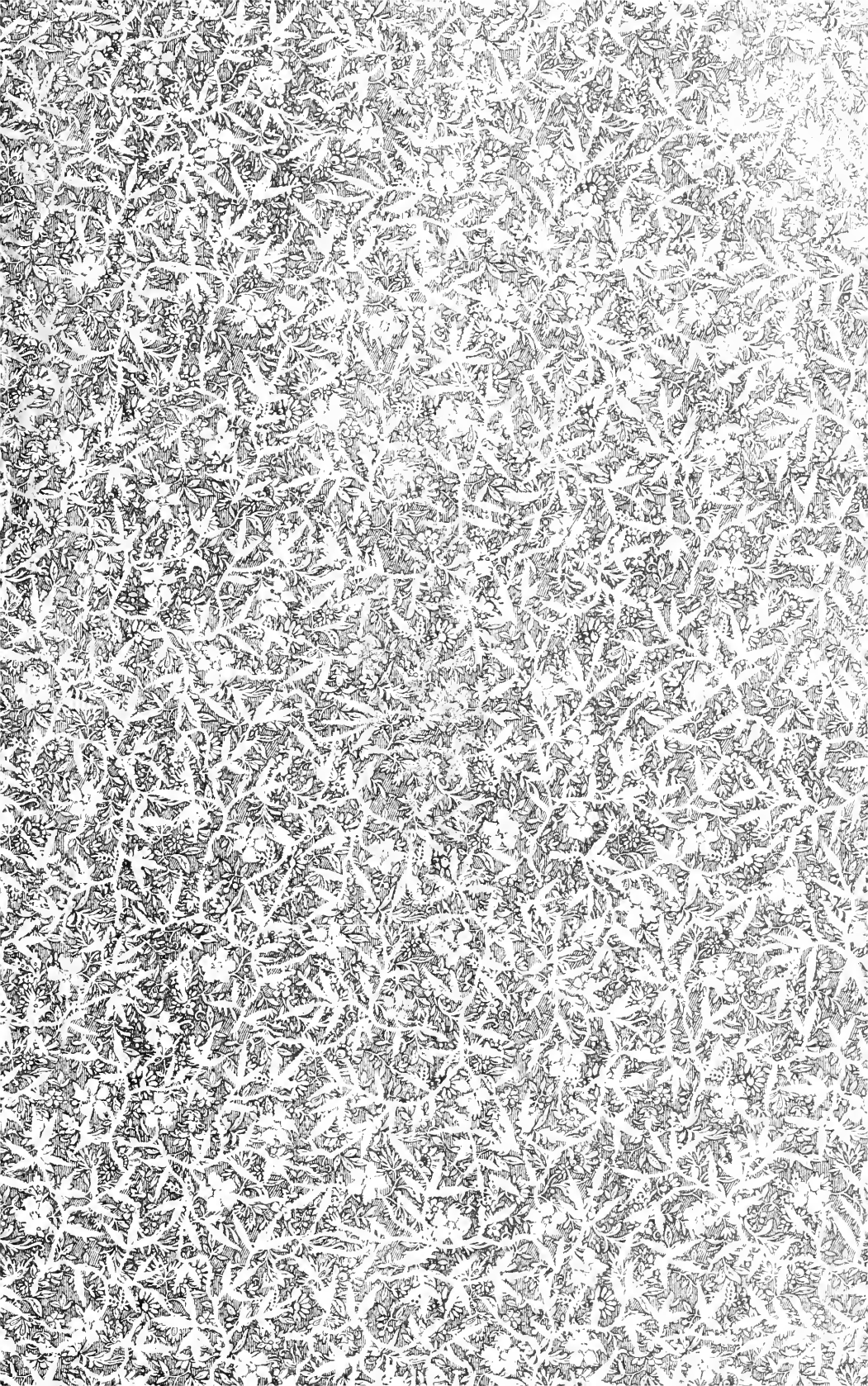
She lingers in the woodland's shade
Where falling, fluttering leaves
With scarlet fleck the peaceful glade,
Or out 'midst harvest sheaves
The summer may have strayed.

Just on beyond the summer goes,—
And joys of beauteous days
That reached the heart o'er breath of rose
Are vanishing in golden haze
As smilingly she goes.



L. G. C.





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